

Application No. 10/687,721
Amendments in Response to Office Action of April 25, 2006

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A self-checkout system comprising:
a self-checkout station configured for customer-operated self-checkout of items for purchase;
a plurality of supervisory mobile data terminals, of which at least one is a mobile terminal
comprising a wireless network interface and a biometric data sensor, configured to
monitor and supervise self-checkout transactions; and
a controller operatively coupled to the mobile plurality of supervisory terminals and to the
self-checkout station, said controller being configured to administer communications
between checkout stations and supervisory terminals, and to send data over a wireless
network to the mobile a selected supervisory terminal instructing the mobile terminal to
initiate a biometric data capture operation, said biometric data capture operation being
related to a self-checkout transaction.
2. (currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein:
the self-checkout station is one of a plurality of self-checkout stations and the mobile
supervisory terminals is are operatively coupled to the plurality of self-checkout stations;
and
the data sent to the a mobile supervisory terminal to initiate the biometric data capture comprises
data identifying at least one self-checkout station for which biometric data capture is to be
performed.
3. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data sensor comprises a sensor
selected from the group consisting of a fingerprint sensor, an iris recognition scanner, and a
voice recognition device.

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4. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data capture operation comprises receiving fingerprint attribute data at a fingerprint sensor.
5. (cancelled)
6. (original) The system of claim 4 wherein the biometric data capture operation further comprises input of a date of birth.
7. (original) The system of claim 6 wherein the controller is configured to query a database using the date of birth as a key to retrieve a plurality of candidate age verification records, each record associating the date of birth with biometric attribute data characterizing a customer fingerprint previously captured at a fingerprint sensor.
8. (currently amended) The system of claim 4 wherein:
the controller is one of a plurality of controllers;
each self-checkout station comprises a co-located one of the plurality of controllers; and
each of the controllers is operatively coupled to the supervisory data terminals.
9. (cancelled)
10. (currently amended) The system of claim 9 1, wherein the at least one mobile supervisory data terminal is a battery operated mobile supervisory device terminal.
11. (currently amended) The system of claim 4, wherein:
the mobile supervisory data terminal and the controller interoperate to perform a plurality of supervisory functions associated with customer self-checkout at the checkout station;
the supervisory functions comprise processing of a payment transaction.

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12. (currently amended) The system of claim 11, wherein:

the payment transaction comprises a payment type selected from the group consisting of a credit card payment, a debit card payment, and an electronic funds transfer payment; and processing the payment transaction further comprises receiving a signature input at the mobile supervisory data terminal.

13. (currently amended) A method for self-checkout of items that are sold on a restricted basis, the method comprising:

following scanning of an item by a self-checkout customer, retrieving from a database a record indicating whether the scanned item is a restricted item;

when the item is a restricted item, verifying a characteristic of the customer, said verifying comprising:

receiving a target data input at a biometric sensor, the target data characterizing a biometric feature of the customer;

retrieving from a database a plurality of candidate records, each of said records comprising biometric attribute data associated with a different one of a plurality of customers;

comparing the target data to the biometric attribute data in the plurality of records to identify a matching record;

when a matching record is identified, based on the matched record, determining whether said item sold on a restricted basis can be sold to the customer; or

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when in response to the a matching record cannot be identified, generating a signal indicating a need for supervisory assistance; and initiating an exception process; whereby input is received through a system controller from a store attendant using a selected supervisory data terminal to cause a new database record to be generated, said new database record enabling automated age verification of said customer during subsequent purchase transactions.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein:

 said restricted basis comprises an age restriction;
 verifying further comprises receiving from the customer a date of birth; and
 retrieving the plurality of candidate records comprises querying based on the date of birth
 to retrieve the plurality of records.

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A method of processing input at a supervisory terminal in a self-checkout system using a at least one handheld supervisory device data terminal, the method comprising:

 at a self-checkout station,
 generating a supervisory request signal indicating that input of customer biometric data is required to further the processing of a self-checkout transaction by a customer,
 transmitting the supervisory request signal through a system controller to a selected handheld supervisory data terminal, said handheld device terminal comprising a biometric sensor; and

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at the handheld supervisory device data terminal,
receiving the supervisory request signal through a system controller,
presenting a prompt alerting a user of the handheld device terminal that input of customer
biometric data is necessary;
receiving customer biometric data at the biometric sensor; and
transmitting the biometric data to the self-checkout station for further processing.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the biometric sensor comprises a fingerprint
sensor.